

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 373.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1861.

PRICE 1½d.

POKING THE FIRE.

Nothing can be more irritating than the feeble, incomplete way in which some people poke their fires. I cannot bear to look at them. But I don't know which is worse, the indecisive 'potter,' or the ignorant, inartistic 'smash' which batters down the pregnant covering of caked coal into a black confusion, letting the precious materials of a blaze escape unignited up the chimney.

To stir a fire *perfectly*, requires the touch of a sculptor, the eye of an architect, and the wrist of a dentist. I never saw it done thoroughly well above a dozen times in my life; and though there are approximations, more or less distant, within the reach of ordinary men, do not suppose that the process is a simple one, capable of being performed in a single operation.

There is the *tap* when the fire has eaten into the heart of a big, upper boulder-coal, and its opening chinks require but a slight shock to part, and let the imprisoned flame spring forth. There is the *lift*, when the poker acts as a lever to the crust, and lets the rich loosened fragments drop into the red-hot cavern. There is the *stir universal*, when the mass has been left too long, and requires a thorough mixing. There is the ventilating poke, when the roof of the fabric has fallen heavily in, and the struggling flame has hardly power enough to overcome the incumbent mass. In this case, the poker must be moved slowly, and left for a minute between the bars after the movement has been made. In contrast to all this is the procedure of the fairer part of creation—the *varium et mutabile*—as epitomised in the noted definition of an Irish archbishop: 'woman, a creature who does not reason, and who *pokes the fire from the top*.' A truth, no doubt, but a partial one; for, reader, have you not seen male animals also commit this fearful outrage on the lares of the hearth?

Then there are side-pokes, and indeed many varieties of treatment adapted to the state of the patient: for a fire is a living friend, though a capricious one, and must be managed with respect and affection. A friend, ay! Does he not glance a bright welcome when you enter your room of a morning? Is he not glad and merry when you come home? Does he not wink at you out of the window, when you mount the doorstep? Is he not quiet and considerate in your study or sick-chamber? If you are dreamy, and sit with feet on fender, does he not sympathise with you, building fairy grottos, and peopling them with fantastic shapes, to suit and soothe your mood? A friend! I should think so. He is kind even when you turn your back upon him. But I grieve to see the unfeeling

way he is often treated after months of closest intimacy. You have sat by his side; you have talked with him by the hour together; you have held your hands over him, as if you blessed him; you have looked into his heart through all the dull dead winter, and found it ever warm; and then, when fickle, gaudy summer comes, and the sun peers into the room, catching the fire's eye with an insulting stare, is it to be wondered at if he sometimes slips out in the sulks? You should have humoured him a little—drawn down the blind, and not left him alone to eat his heart up in neglect.

Putting on coals, too, is a delicate process. A good healthy fire does not much mind a heavy meal, but a dyspeptic requires to be fed with caution. The surest way, though a slow one, is to take up a lump at a time, in the tongs, and build a loose cairn above the feeble blaze. How quickly the flames search the black interstices, and change the dead mass into a pyramid of life! It is marvellous how soon a coy spark may be thus coaxed into a steady unequivocal fire. Coals ought not to be very big, but about the size of potatoes—the smaller ones choke and stunt the natural progress of the flame.

I do not wonder at the freedom of the grate being made a test of friendship. You cannot trust an acquaintance to touch your fire. It is not only impertinent, but often unfeeling in him to attempt it. A hearth is a sacred place. Nothing accounts more easily for the absence of domesticity among many foreigners, than their want of open grates. That can hardly be a home which is warmed by an invisible fire in the bowels of a great dead-looking stove. It is not worth protecting. Who would die fighting for an Arnott? No, no—the successive and contradictory advertisements of patent stoves, assure me that the Briton has not yet accommodated himself to so unconstitutional a machine. He cannot find any to suit him, and I humbly trust he never will. Wood-fires are better than stoves; they can be poked—indeed, properly managed, they emit an excellent warmth, and crackle well.

But about the right way of burning logs. Piling them up is simple enough, and a right genial hearty act it is; but many miss the power of a wood-fire by having the ashes frequently cleared away. Leave them there—let them accumulate for a week; then, if you will, keep them within bounds; but let there be always a mound or bed on which the log may lie. They warm a room well; indeed, they never go quite out, though they look white and cold by early daylight. Some time ago, when staying at Rome, the frost was very sharp, and we had large wood-fires. Dominico, our man, never cleared the ashes away.

The first thing in the morning, he used to stick a number of canes into the ash-heap, and, lo! in a few minutes there was a bright blaze. All the associations, too, of a wood-fire are pleasant: there is the riving of logs with wedges—work for the brain of a mathematician, as well as exercise for his body; there is the picking up of odd bits of sticks in the plantation, saying, 'There, that will do for the fire,' and then coming in and feeding it yourself. There is a prosperous look about a woodstack, and well-stored basket of sawn billets in the corner of the room. These materials, indeed, are more pleasing than the best double-screened Wallsend. There is nothing hearty in the appearance of a coal-hole.

I cannot bear polished fire-irons. Polished grates may sometimes add to the effect of a well-built, well-kept fire, but the ends of the tools should be black. Never stuff up the grate with ornaments; hang something in front, if you will, but have the fire always laid. Then, on a wet, chilly, July evening, you can indulge the sudden hunger for a blaze, by the aid of a lucifer, at once. But the poker itself—what an apt, multifarious piece of furniture! Not only has it a normal sphere and use of its own, for which, by the way, it should not be made too blunt at the point, but it is a test of physical power and manual dexterity. Such and such a man, we hear, can break a poker on his arm, or bend it round his neck. In this there is not only the appeal to common experience, for who—what Englishman at least—is ignorant of a poker? but a pleasant vision of the feat. We behold the fire round which the athletes sit, over their wine; we hear the conversation stray to deeds of prowess; we see the ready means of illustration present on the spot—the extemporised performance. Then, too, what a ready weapon of offence or defence is supplied in the poker! What more handy? It is a national instrument—the British poker. When the Yorkshire jury acquitted the man who knocked down his wife with it, giving in their verdict, 'Sarved her right!' depend upon it, he would have been hanged if he had done it with the tongs. I wonder whether he was the man who quarrelled with his spouse about the right way of stirring the fire. They had been separated on this account by mutual consent; their friends, however, having brought them together again, they began talking, as they sat by their hearth, on the first evening after their reconciliation, about the folly of falling out on so small a matter, when the lady said: 'Foolish, indeed, my dear, especially as I was right all the time!'

THE VICTORIA BRIDGE.

Few home-staying Britons are aware, that they possess in North America a territory amounting to nearly a ninth part of the land-surface of the globe, permeated by the finest system of natural water-communication that exists; or that in Canada, one of the provinces of this great region, and the seat of a new immigrant population of only three millions, there is a system of canals equally unexampled, with one railway twelve hundred miles long, besides about eight hundred miles of other railways, being, in all, equal to a fourth part of the whole railway communication of wealthy and busy England herself. So rapid, indeed, has been the progress of Canada, that when an Englishman happens to visit her shores, he is usually in no small degree surprised by what meets his gaze. He sees with equal wonder and gratification such goodly cities as Montreal and Toronto. He finds justice housed in halls far exceeding those of Westminster both as to space and elegance. He finds learning cultivated with dignity as well as diligence in superb

and liberally endowed colleges, of which that of Toronto is an especially noble example. He finds also in that city the central office of a most efficient system of juvenile education, on non-sectarian principles, which makes him sigh to think that no such institution can yet be realised at home; and if he mingles in society in these remote regions, he discovers that the elegances, the culture, and the enjoyments to which he may have been accustomed at home, are not wanting.

Foremost among the wonders of Canada must be reckoned the great public work the name of which stands at the head of this paper. There have been many eighth wonders of the world, but none, it may deliberately be said, at all comparable to this. Spanning the St Lawrence at Montreal, the Victoria Bridge forms a necessary part of the main line of railway communication by which the produce of the interior is brought to the ports of the Atlantic. The need was readily to be seen and admitted; if there was to be a railway communication at all—and the frozen state of the water-communications for half the year made this sufficiently desirable—then a viaduct over that grand river became clearly indispensable. But the St Lawrence is a rapid stream, twenty feet deep, and above a mile in width, whose channel becomes so choked with ice in winter, as to seem to make engineering works impossible. To contemplate such an undertaking required a scope and hardihood of imagination beyond all parallel. Nevertheless, the idea was formed by a citizen of Montreal so long ago as 1846,* and in December 1859 the first train passed over the actual structure.

The writer has seldom been so impressed by any outward thing, as by the first sight he obtained of this bridge from the hill behind Montreal, in October 1860. He visited and inspected it next day, in company with several gentlemen of the district, and found his impressions only deepened by the near view. It is not that there is anything picturesque or fine in the structure: its features are, on the contrary, of a simply mechanical character. It is the size and purpose of the work which create a sense of sublimity. One has to drive upwards of a mile out of Montreal to the station, whence proceeds in one direction the Great Trunk Railway of Canada, while in the other appears the Victoria Bridge, by which the continued line is carried on to Portland in Maine. The fabric consists of twenty-four piers, rising sixty feet above the water, with intervals of 242 feet in all instances but one in the centre, which is 330 feet; the upper end of each pier being in a sloping form, to meet the dangerous masses of ice which pour down the stream in winter. Along the tops of the piers is laid a quadrangular tube of plate-iron, 16 feet in breadth, and rising from 18 feet 6 inches at the extremities, to 22 feet in the centre in height; this tube, of course, containing the carriage-track. Such—with abutments at the extremities—are the simple elements of the structure; but when we walk into the tube, we find that this is composed of pieces, one of which crosses the great central span, while each of the others crosses through two of the other intervals, a small vacant space being left at the extremity of each, to allow of the expansion and contraction arising from variations of temperature.

On arriving at the opening of the tube from the

* The Hon. John Young, a native of Ayrshire, a notable example of a group of men of vigorous native faculty, who come prominently out in the British colonies, in consequence of the exigencies of a new country, and the extreme liberality of the popular institutions.

Montreal side of the river, one finds it masked with stonework of Egyptian massiveness, including a lintel, on which is inscribed—'ERECTED A.D. MDCCCLIX: ROBERT STEPHENSON AND ALEXANDER M. ROSS, ENGINEERS.' It was melancholy to reflect that already the first of these men was no more, while the second was represented as so thoroughly broken down in health, as to be, for the present, sequestered from the world. We walked in to about the centre, where an opening and a ladder enabled us to get upon the top, so as to survey freely this marvellous fabric, and its surroundings. Everything seemed severely simple, yet perfectly adapted to its purpose. A side-opening, in like manner, enabled us to observe the form and structure of the piers. Then the word was given that a train was approaching from the south end, and it was necessary to stand aside, and allow it to pass. Our party followed the example set by a few workmen near us, and ranged themselves close to the plates forming the side of the tube, between which and the rail-track only a space of about two feet intervenes. On came the huge noisy object, looking as if it would sweep us all into destruction—it was impossible, with the utmost faith in what we were told of safety, to repress some little tremors. Certainly any sudden faintness at such a moment might have been attended with fatal results, for nothing but an erect position could save us. The blinding and deafening mass passed in its undefined lineaments close to our faces, and I experienced, though I did not express, a feeling of relief when we again saw the empty tube before us, and observed the train wheeling quietly out into the light at the north end. As to the imperfect light within, this is obtained through round holes pierced at intervals in the side plates, at the places where their weakening effect is least felt.

It having been determined, in 1852, that the St Lawrence should be bridged by a metal tube after the style of the Britannia Bridge over the Menai Strait, it was but right and fitting that the aid of Mr Robert Stephenson should be called in by the projectors; and this eminent man, accordingly, visited the spot in the ensuing year. It is admitted, however, on all hands, that the hardest part of the business of engineering was borne by Mr Ross. On the plan being perfected, a prodigious system of labour for its working out was organised by Mr James Hodges, as representing the contractors, for whom he had executed several of the most extensive works in England. It comprised 450 quarrymen, shipping to the extent of 12,000 tons, manned by 500 sailors, and 2090 workmen of other descriptions, exclusive of those required for the preparation of the tube, which was executed piecemeal in England. The work was commenced in January 1854, when the surface of the river was composed of a deep pack of ice fragments, thickly coated over, as usual, by a newly frozen sheet. On this firm surface, a peculiar piece of wooden framework, called a *crib*, was formed and sunk, such being a necessary preparative to the forming of a coffer-dam in which to lay the foundations of the first pier.

In the course of the summer and autumn, two coffer-dams had been formed, and in one of them a pier had been built. Great fears were entertained as to the effects of the winter's ice on these fabrics; and the two dams did actually give way on the 4th of January 1855, when the pack of ice broke up. The accumulation had been going on for four days, until the river had risen high above its usual level, and lay in a widely extended sheet over the adjacent country. 'At length,' to pursue a narration which we owe to Mr Hodges, 'some slight symptoms of motion were visible. The universal stillness which prevailed was interrupted by an occasional creaking, and every one breathlessly awaited the result, straining every nerve to ascertain if the movement was general. The uncertainty lasted but a short period; for in a few minutes the uproar arising from the rushing waters,

the cracking, grinding, and shoving of the fields of ice, burst on our ears. The sight of twenty square miles (over 120,000,000 tons) of packed ice (which but a few minutes before seemed as a lake of solid rock), all in motion, presented a scene grand beyond description. The traveller-frames, and No. 2 dam, glided for a distance of some hundred yards without having a joint of their framework broken. But as the movement of the ice became more rapid, and the fearful noises increased, these tall frameworks appeared to become animate; and after performing some three or four evolutions like huge giants in a waltz, they were swallowed up, and reduced to a shapeless mass of crushed fragments. After gazing at this marvellous scene in silence, till it was evident that the heaviest of the shoving was over, all those in the transit tower, from which it had been witnessed, began to inquire how the solitary pier No. 1, which had been battling alone amid this chaos, had escaped. Although some affected to entertain no fear, the author confesses, for his own part, to have felt infinitely relieved when, upon looking through the transit instrument, he discovered that the pier had not been disturbed.'

It was against difficulties and dangers like these, and in the narrow intervals of time when the nature of the climate permitted men to work, that the masonry of the Victoria Bridge proceeded. Meanwhile, the preparation of the plates required for the tubes proceeded at the Canada Works in Birkenhead. This branch of the work was one of great nicety, for every part of the tube required its own degree of strength, according to the strain and the compression which it was called upon to bear. A plan or map of each tube was made, upon which was shewn each plate, T-bar, angle-iron, keelson, and cover-plate, required in the different situations, with the position of each marked by a distinctive character or figure. As the work advanced, 'every piece of iron as it was punched and finished for shipment, was stamped with the identical mark corresponding with that on the plan; so that when being erected in Canada, although each tube was composed of 4926 pieces, or 9852 for a pair, the workmen, being provided with a plan of the work, were enabled to lay down piece by piece with unerring certainty till the tube was complete.'

In the business of the masonry, great praise was due by the sub-contractor, Mr Chaffey, for certain remarkable contrivances by which the transport of the stones was greatly facilitated. At St Lambert, 'a stock of material, amounting to at least 10,000 tons, was to be accumulated and placed in such position in the stone-field, prior to the commencement of the masonry, as to admit of each distinct course being kept separate, and readily accessible when required. To effect this, a *steam-traveller* sixty-six feet in length, placed on a ghanty-frame raised twenty feet from the ground, and extending about six hundred feet in length, was constructed. The boiler and engine were attached to the *jennie*, and traversed laterally along the traveller, being provided at the same time with a gearing to admit of a motion being communicated to the traveller, driving it from one end of the staging to the other. With this machinery, worked by one intelligent boy, a train of cars, loaded with the heaviest blocks of stone, could be moved on the railway-track, underneath, backwards and forwards, as required, and the stones taken up and deposited together, according to the courses they were intended for. We have frequently seen this extraordinary automaton at work, with three of its six distinct movements going on at one time. Thus, a block of limestone, weighing perhaps eight tons, would be taken from a car, and while in the process of being

* Hodges's Construction of the Victoria Bridge. London, 1860. This is a superbly illustrated work, mainly designed for the instruction of the profession.

† Hodges.

elevated to the height necessary for placing it on the top of a pile some distance further on, and at the side of the pile, the lateral motion was carrying it sideways, and the whole machine moving in the direction of the pile at the rate of four miles an hour; which point reached, and the stone safely deposited, the three motions were instantaneously reversed, and the traveller brought back to the car for a second load, to be conveyed perhaps in an entirely different direction."

The work was completed at the close of 1859, and tested in the most unmerciful manner by the passing of a train of platform cars, five hundred and twenty feet in length, loaded with stone to the utmost, when even the central and longest tube was found to be deflected to an extent of less than two inches. It needed but this fact to perfect the glory of a work which promises to be an enduring monument of British skill, enterprise, and perseverance.

THE FAMILY SCAPEGRACE.

CHAPTER XV.—A MODEL TO BE AVOIDED.

AFTER breakfast, Lucidora was despatched to Mr Sunstroke, to acquaint him of the treasure that awaited his inspection at his photographic rooms—for the apartments occupied by Mr and Mrs Jones were his, and had been fitted up, as we have seen, with an eye to art purposes rather than to domestic convenience. Better, however, is any unfurnished residence, gratis, than the most stately dwelling-place and rent therewith; and the two models lived cheaply and contentedly in their glass-house—throwing no stones at others, we will hope—and were even enabled to accommodate a young friend in addition, as we have seen. Their home and their place of business were thus conveniently amalgamated. From sunset until after breakfast, all was domesticity and private life; but in the daytime, the nuptial-chamber was devoted to collodion and the black art, and the larger room became a theatre for tableaux.

Those outdoor picnics, so redolent of the leafy summer-time, with which the stereoscope has made us so familiar, all had their origin in that art-attic over the Haymarket. There, couched at ease upon green baize, and under the shade of canvas woods, those July revellers held their pasteboard feasts, no matter what the weather or the season. There, too, was temporarily reared the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault of that well-known cathedral—which has drawn many a tear from the impressionable mediæval eye, stereoscopically deceived—wherein those white-robed choristers (at one-and-six) are swinging censers, with bowed head, before their bishop. And there, above all, those classical statues, with which we are so well acquainted, more lifelike than the greatest triumphs of Grecian art, reversed the miracle of Pygmalion, and turned from flesh and blood to marble.

In such a very alight flesh-coloured garment, that the wearer felt excessively alarmed lest Mrs Jones should re-enter the apartment before he changed it, the compliant Dick was now regarding himself in the big basin. Around his brow was a wreath of water-lilies made of green and white cotton, which bobbed about his face, and tickled him like a night-cap with a too luxuriant crop of tassels. A piece of blue calico was looped about him, much as a window-curtain is

festooned to right or left; while into his countenance was thrown as vivid an expression of self-admiration as his sense of the lowliness of the temperature and the falseness of his own position would permit the lad to assume.

'A little more forward, if you please, Narcissus,' observed Mr Jones, who was in charge of the camera: 'not so much as that, though; thank you. Don't laugh, whatever you do, or you'll be a dreadful object. Good Heavens! what are you scratching your ear for? Pooh, pooh, a model must never itch! Couldn't you stand on one leg for a little, in order to give a lightness to the attitude?'

'Not without tumbling into the basin,' rejoined Dick; 'I couldn't, indeed.'

'Ah, well, we will try that afterwards, then; it will not look ill as a specimen of an instantaneous — I say, you mustn't wink your eyes, Narcissus; you must stare steadily and fondly upon the water, please — That's not a bad notion, though, I was going to say, for Sappho throwing herself off the Lesbian rock into the sea. Mrs T.—Mrs Jones, I mean—shall be Sappho, only it will spoil her clothes a good deal, unless she does it in a bathing-gown; and you shall be Phæon. Now, you must not move a hairsbreadth, Dick, for the photograph is just going to be taken; but don't hold your breath so much, or you will be purple, and there is no knowing what queer colour that may turn to in the photograph.'

In a couple of minutes, Narcissus the original was permitted to re-assume his less classical garments, and Narcissus the copy was lying in the dark chamber, steeped in an offensive preparation.

'You did it capitally,' observed Mr Jones with triumph, 'and now it only remains to name your reward. Shall it be beer and tobacco, or shall we go to the Zoological Gardens?'

'Neither, thank you,' replied Dick, 'just now. I should prefer, if you don't mind—although you have forbore to inquire into my own recent history—to learn why it is you sometimes call Mrs Jones, Mrs T.'

For a moment, the photographee looked a little annoyed, but immediately recovering his good-humour, observed: 'With all my heart, lad, for you are sure to know it some day, sooner or later. Come and sit down by the fire, and listen to the history of one who has been neglected by his age; and draw the corks of that couple of bottles before we begin, Dick, for I hate to be interrupted by noise. When I went about the country with a couple of big candles and a Shakspeare, giving that admirable course of readings from the immortal bard, of which it was justly remarked by the *Land's End Thunderer*—But there, I daresay, you never heard of them. Well, when I went about elevating the masses by the lever of Dramatic Elocution, I always began the entertainment by a dissertation against noise.'

By this time the beer was drawn and emptied into a huge 'pewter,' into which the Classical Model, having dipped his features, and emerged from the foam thereof after the manner of Cytherean Venus, commenced as follows:

'If Locke's theory be untenable, and one baby be really brought into the world with instincts and characteristics differing from those of another baby, it is certain that the individual who now addresses you was born a gentleman. I was a precious high chap in my notions from my very cradle, and I shall always be a precious high chap until I die. It was therefore monstrously inconsistent of Nature, having thus endowed me with qualities only befitting an exalted station, to permit my father to be the proprietor of an inconsiderable eating-house in White-chapel; and whatever griefs I have since come to—and they have been numerous—I have attributed,

* *Legge's Glance at the Victoria Bridge*. Montreal, 1860 (p. 133).

and, I think, with justice, to Nature only. It may be easily imagined that my poor parent—a good enough man in his line, which was, however, mainly confined to mutton-pies and sheep's trotters, with a sprinkling of a singular viand denominated Chitterlings, the origin and nature of which are shrouded in mystery—was quite unable to appreciate the boon which had been conferred upon him in an offspring such as myself. But my mother—ah, my mother! [here Mr Jones appeared to be overcome with emotion, and once more buried his face for an extraordinary length of time in the pewter] that old lady was a regular trump, and that's all about it.

'Ah,' murmured Dick in a sympathetic voice, 'that's just like my mother.'

'Well, I cut away from the tripe business, and my mother brought me back again, and then I cut away again. Then I went to school, and cut away from that. Then I was bound apprentice to a sign-painter—for I had always a yearning towards the Fine Arts—and I cut away from him. And at last, when I had made trial, in short, of most things that a lad might try on *terra firma*, I cut away from that, and went to sea. My connections, generally, were of a narrow order of mind, and didn't appreciate me. When I was quite young, they only shook their heads, and remarked, that, "after all, I was nobody's enemy but my own." But when I grew older, and wanted a little money from them now and then to start afresh, then I became their enemy, and they shut their doors against me coincidentally with their pockets. When I returned home to Whitechapel from my first voyage, my father was very far from killing a fatted calf in honour of that event: if it hadn't been for my mother, in fact, I should have had nothing for supper that night except cold chitterlings. He even expressed himself as owing Nature a grudge for having presented him with such a son, whereas, as I have demonstrated, the grievance lay precisely the other way; while, in conclusion, he gave it as his opinion that I was nothing less than a "black sheep"—his very metaphors, you perceive, being drawn from those shambles whence he procured the raw material for the carrying on of his ignoble profession. In England, said he, there was no pasturage, he thanked Heaven, proper for cattle of that sort, but there was a portion of the globe recently discovered, especially adapted, and, as it seemed to some, providentially designed, for the accommodation and sustenance of Black Sheep—namely, Australia. If I was content to be exported thither, he would pay my passage; if I was not

There was a certain choleric vulgarity, in short, about my respectable parent—attribution, in some degree, as I have always endeavoured to hope, to his over-attachment to pigs' puddings—that led him into language which, from respect to his memory, I will not repeat.

Wishing, however, to act a dutiful part, and being also entirely unprovided with the means for carrying on a domestic war, I acceded to the parental terms. I embarked for the Antipodes, and was accompanied on board the *Betsey Jane* by my father himself, impelled to that step by ardent affection, doubtless, and the desire of bidding me farewell, but also by the lingering suspicion that I might otherwise spend my passage-money more agreeably than in maritime travel. The ship was but a small one for so long a voyage, and not well officered; the watches, particularly at night, being very ill kept. My berth was so small, that when we reached the Tropics it grew unbearable, and when it was fair, I used to lie on deck instead of below, with only the stars above me.

One particularly still and solemn night, when I chanced to take up my quarters close beside the steersman, I felt as disinclined for sleep as for exertion. I lay in a torpid state with my eyes open, but with my senses partially shut, and with my thoughts occupied indeed, yet not under my

control, but wandering at their own wondrous will in the past and in the future, to the annihilation of time and space. The only sounds that broke the universal silence which reigned over sky and sea, were the turning of the wheel beside me, and the clanking of the rudder-chains, at first at irregular intervals, and with more or less of violence, but presently becoming quite monotonous; for the helmsman had fallen asleep, and left that indifferent vessel, the *Betsey Jane*, entirely to her own devices. Then the heavens grew cloudy, and the stars dimmer and dimmer, and the wind began to rise; and still I lay with my face skyward, conscious but unconcerned.

All of a sudden, there loomed something monstrous far above my face, shutting out the clouds from my sight, and I heard a noise other than that of the rippling of the waves about our stern—it was the sound which the cut-water of a vessel makes in a freshening breeze. In half a second, I became fully conscious that the bowsprit of some huge ship was passing over us, and that in another half-second the *Betsey Jane* would be run down with all her crew complete. Casting my cloak from off me, I leaped at the rigging which hung about the mighty beam, and thereby managed to climb up on it, and thence, with cautious trepidation, like a cat in walnut shells upon the ice, on to the fore-castle of the stranger. When I had reached so far, the *Betsey Jane* was not to be seen. She had not been run down, for I had not felt the slightest shock, but had escaped by the skin of her teeth, and with the loss of one of her most respectable passengers.

I was not at all surprised, after what had happened, to find the look-out man of the stranger also asleep at his post; but it did disgust me, when I woke him for the purpose of explaining the circumstances, to see him throw up his arms with a great shriek, and run below, exclaiming that the devil was on the fore-castle; though, if the thing had happened in these stereoscopic days, there might have been some foundation for the libel. As it chanced, I had got on board an Australian vessel bound for the London Docks, where I presently arrived, after a six months' sea-voyage almost unprecedented in the barrenness of its results.

My reception in Whitechapel, as may be easily imagined, was not enthusiastic; but, on the other hand, I arrived just in time to receive the bequest of the travelling wild-beast show from my maternal uncle; it goes about the country under my name until this day; but as you are aware, I did not long remain its proprietor. The position was not, perhaps, of a sufficiently gentlemanlike character to suit my aspiring nature. You would have liked it, would you, Dick? Perhaps so: I have often regretted, myself, that I should have been born so precious high. The very same thing occurred when I subsequently took up the dog-trade. A puppy's tail, Dick, take my word for it, is not a mouthful for a gentleman; and yet, unless they are bitten off, "the Fancy" will not have them at any price. I daresay I had eaten many a one in my respected papa's pies; but then the cooking makes such a deal of difference. That good man died at the very period when I failed in dogs—a circumstance which redounds to his credit as a man and a father—and paid the debt of nature just in time to enable me to settle with my creditors. My poor mother was not left quite so well provided for as might have been expected—for my father's will, it seems, had always been in my favour, although his way had sometimes been so unpleasant—and she therefore very wisely determined to take a situation as—as—as housekeeper in a gentleman's family; and I am bound to say that she has been of considerable use to me while in that position.

'Is it Mrs Trimming?' asked Dick with some hesitation.

'That is the very party,' observed Mr Jones, 'and a very nice old party she is. It was thought that

your respected uncle might have a prejudice about her being the mother of such a—— What shall I say?

'Such a precious high chap,' suggested Dick with gravity.

'Just so,' returned Mr Jones; 'and therefore we have kept the connection dark, as far as he is concerned.'

'And Mrs Jones being your wife, that is why you call her Mrs T.,' observed Dick.

'Well, the fact is, she is, and she isn't,' returned the photographee, revisiting the tankard. 'My mother don't know about it, you see; she has her prejudices—I find so many people have about so many things—and so I keep that dark too. But, hark! I hear Lucidora's footsteps upon the stairs, and, if I mistake not, that of our proprietor also.'

As he finished speaking, Mrs Jones entered the room, accompanied by Mr Sunstroke, a little old man with an immense pair of gray moustaches. He was always stroking and petting these, as though to keep them in good-humour, and dissuade them from flying away with him—a proceeding for which they looked admirably adapted—and he stood now in the doorway with one of them in each hand, and with his head very much on one side, regarding Dick with his keen, critical eyes, as though the lad were some object of *verthé*, of which he had been offered the first refusal.

'I don't like that little mole on his left cheek,' observed the photographer, after a prolonged investigation.

'Ah, that's where I differ from you!' returned Mr Jones with coolness. 'Without that mole, he would be commonplace enough, perhaps; but with it—being as it is, a beauty rather than a blemish, too—he becomes unique at once.'

'Yes,' replied the artist drily, 'so unique that everybody must needs know him again, and he will only serve us for one pose. The public can't be expected to believe that Hyacinth, Ganymede, Narcissus, and the whole army of mythological youth, were all distinguished by a mole upon their left cheeks, you know: it's quite ridiculous.'

'Suppose,' suggested Mr Jones sardonically, 'that you sometimes took his right profile instead of his left.'

'There's something in that,' assented the little artist candidly; 'and the young fellow is not altogether without expression, I must confess.'

Dick, indeed, was looking volumes of astonishment, as well he might, while this question of his personal valuation was being settled, and felt much relieved when the bargain was concluded, and he found himself pledged to give some half-a-dozen 'sittings' to Mr Sunstroke—although he never sat except in that celebrated pose of the 'Boy Extracting a Thorn'—at thirty shillings for the single figure, and a pound for one of a group; one half of which remuneration was to go to Mr Jones, in return for food and lodgment.

'Well,' observed the artist, when these terms had been finally arranged, 'I should have come up here this morning at all events, independently of our classical young friend. I have gone into a new line since I was with you yesterday morning. The stereoscopic business is extending, my friends—is ramifying. You remember that prison-tour of ours, Trimming, last summer, wherein we photographed about five hundred as ill-looking scoundrels as the sun ever shone upon, in order that justice might keep mementos of their visit—duplicates of their expressive physiognomies. Well, I was sent for special, by the police, last afternoon, to do another job for them. It has been determined, it seems, in the case of all unclaimed—However, just look at that; it speaks for itself, don't it?'

Mr Sunstroke drew a slide out of his pocket, placed it in a stereoscope, and handed it to Mr Jones for inspection; then stroking his moustaches with great vehemence, as if to make up for his neglect of them

while arranging the instrument, he awaited the verdict of his photographee.

'It's the most lifelike, at least deathlike thing,' cried Mr Jones, 'I ever—— But here, Dick, what do you say about it; your opinion, as that of an outsider, should be better worth having? Isn't that a splendid specimen of what art can do towards strengthening the hands of justice? A score of years after that mortal body has dropped to pieces, the lineaments of the dead man's features will remain as you see them now, to be recognised by any!'

'Gotschakoff!' cried the lad with a shriek of terror, casting the instrument upon the ground, and cowering into a corner of the wall, as if he had been struck.

Mr Sunstroke bounded forward, but too late to save the already shattered slide; Lucidora rushed into the little chamber for a jug of water to throw over the fainting boy; but Mr Jones seized possession of the camera, and bidding everybody keep away from the lad upon their lives, proceeded to take an instantaneous photograph of him—which afterwards became one of the most popular of the 'ghost-slides,' under the very taking title of *The Spectre-smitten—a Study!*

CHAPTER XVI.

IN TROUBLE.

Having thus involuntarily commenced his profession—having achieved his first stereoscopic success in a manner at least as accidental as that by which the artist in the story painted his cloud—namely, by throwing his brush at it—Dick pursued it with assiduity and pleasure. It was not very hard work, even while it was going on, and wet days and dark days were holidays in the photographic calendar; moreover, it was rather pleasant to recognise himself in shop-windows, and hear the criticisms passed by the vulgar upon his classical attitudes. Mr Sunstroke's manner was kind, and his anecdotes amusing enough, whenever, at least, there was anything like a good light. Mr Jones was always chatty and agreeable; and Lucidora, although she suffered occasionally from depression of spirits, imparted that feminine flavour to the general conversation without which the society of the greatest wits is said to be imperfect. She evidently liked the youth, and her manifestation of that feeling produced at once its effect on Dick, whose heart was indeed a very mirror for reflecting the least good-will that happened to be shewn to it; but Mr Jones monopolised most of the talk when Mr Sunstroke was not with them, and studiously confined it to the airiest themes, so that the lady's disposition and character remained almost as unknown to Dick as on the night when he had first seen her. He never chanced to be left alone with her—Mr Jones declaring that he was jealous of Narcissus—until a certain morning some weeks after his arrival, when the photographee had gone out for some twenty minutes to his *costumier* Shadrach, to hire that very hussar uniform in which we have so often seen him proposing to the young lady in the conservatory.

'Richard Arbour,' exclaimed she the instant that the street-door was shut, and without the least hesitation or introduction, 'would you like to see your mother once again before she dies?'

Dick, who, very much in dishabille, was fitting a gilded wing on to a flesh-coloured shoulder-strap, uttered such an inarticulate cry of grief and terror, that the woman's eyes, which had looked hard and harsh enough when she first spoke, grew tender at once. 'Hush,' she went on, 'it is not your fault, or at least not all your fault. They have kept that from you which they should have told. Mr Sunstroke does not want to lose you, because—— O Dick, we are all of us very selfish, and need much forgiveness!'

'What of my mother?' whispered the lad, as though he heard her not. 'What of my dear mother?'

'She is ill—very ill,' returned the other. 'I am sure of that by what I heard last night. Richard was told so by Mrs Trimming. She is in Golden Square, not ten minutes' run from this, Dick. To-morrow, Eternity itself may be between you. I have known what it is to miss a mother's blessing; I pray you may never know it, too, and that is why I speak.'

'I will tell her,' sobbed Dick, as he thrust on his shoes and coat—'I will tell her how you saved me from that loss.'

'Tell her nothing about me!' exclaimed the girl with passionate shrillness. 'Forget me and all that belongs to me when you leave this room. Let not the thought of her be ever mixed up with thought of me, unless you would defile your mother's memory!'

Hurried and panic-struck as the boy was through the news he had just heard, he ran up to the wretched woman as she poured forth her bitter words, and lifted up his face that she might kiss him. But she turned away, and put him aside with her hand, crying that her lips were poison; and again bade him depart while there should yet be time.

Dick needed no third warning, but fled down the stairs and into the street like one distracted. Fast as he flew, however, through the wondering crowds, and short as was the distance he had to traverse, the thoughts of what he had done, and what he had left undone, in regard to his beloved mother, passed through his conscience-stricken mind again and again. He had written to her but three times during the fifteen months or so that had elapsed since his departure from his uncle's, giving indeed a cheerful view of his mode of life, but without specifying what it was, or mentioning any address whereby she might write to him, as he well knew she must have lovingly longed to do. Cognizant of her thralldom to Sister Maria, he had not ventured to disclose his whereabouts, for fear of its being revealed to Uncle Ingram, while his boyish pride revolted at the idea of confessing the actual nature of the humble pursuits in which he had been engaged. The sense of this unfeeling conduct, unmitigated now by any such excuses, possessed him wholly, and left no room for any dread of repulse or humiliation that he might meet with at the hands of his uncle or Adolphus. He only yearned to penitently cast himself at the feet of her whose loving heart was breaking—perhaps broken—for his sake; for *his*, to whom a stranger—and, by her own account, a far from exemplary character herself—had had to point out the cruelty of his silence, and to remind him of that parent who ought never to have been absent from his thoughts. What was drudgery in the china warehouse, or cold looks and cutting words from those who loved him not, that to escape them he should have added so heavily to that burden of sorrow which he well knew his mother had to bear? Had *she* ever shrunk from a personal sacrifice by which the merest pleasure was to be conferred upon himself? 'Wicked, wicked boy though I have been,' thought he, 'henceforth, at all events, mother, you shall never have cause to complain of the conduct of your son!'

Alas! how unfortunate is it that these inward determinations of Reformation—these little private Improvement bills which are passed in the Parliament of our own hearts—can never be made sufficiently public; and what is of greater importance, be got to be publicly believed! that we cannot cry, 'Let bygones be bygones,' and so become quits for what has passed, with all the world! 'My behaviour, up to this time,' so our confession runs, 'has been, I must confess, abominable, and nothing less; but henceforward, O my fellow-creatures, I start upon a new tack and under an honest flag. I have got out of the Smuggling cyclone, and mean to be driven for the future by no other winds than most straightforward ones. You and I, O Revenue Cutter, called *Society*, have been hitherto at cross-purposes, but let us mutually salute. I feel already, in anticipation, the delights that will flow

from a due obedience to the Excise laws.' But, alas! the *Society* ranges up with her guns double-shotted; can be got to credit nothing of what is intended for the future; harps solely upon some past 'Tub,' illegally run by us the deuce knows when, and takes us into harbour a condemned vessel, just as we were upon the point of commencing a career of universal usefulness.

Poor Dick was as full of pious resolves, as dead to any old temptations, when he turned the corner of the street leading into Golden Square, as any lad of his years could be in all London, when, lo and behold! a hand is laid upon his collar, and a voice, as firm and quiet as that of conscience itself, remarks: 'We've got you at last, young gentleman; though we have been looking after you a plaguy long time!'

Thus spoke that efficient officer A1 of the metropolitan police force, taking the steadiest gripe of the lad's coat-collar, but managing, nevertheless, to convey no other idea to casual passengers, but that Dick and he were engaged in familiar conversation; 'Now, I don't want to throttle you, young sir, nor nothing like it, so I do hope you have made up your mind to come along without a row.'

Poor Dick had certainly just been making up his mind to obey all constituted authorities, but the practical compliance thus immediately expected of him was rather embarrassing too.

'Why, you *must* have known,' continued A1, in answer to his astonished look, 'that this here was the very place of all places as you should never have come to. There's one of us in every street out of that square yonder with his orders about you. There's been a detective a-lolling against your area-gates for the last fortnight. Why, lawk a mercy! to see you a-coming here in the broad daylight, as though there was nothing out against you, and no reward for your being took up—why, it do beat lettuces for greenness; and you a conspirator too!'

'A conspirator!' echoed the wondering lad. 'I don't know what you mean indeed; but I do pray that you will let me see my mother first, before you take me away.'

'O lor! O my! I can't stand this,' exclaimed the policeman, taking out a pair of handcuffs from his pocket. 'You *must* be a slippery chap to talk like that. For a young murderer and a foreign plotter to be so precious innocent and devotedly attached to his parent, is something too much.'

'O don't, for God's sake, don't!' cried the agonized boy. 'I have done nothing to deserve to wear those things, indeed. I had nothing to do with it—if it's about Count Gotschakoff—except that I told upon him to Mr De Crespigny, to save the others.'

'Crepinny was his name, was it?' repeated the policeman. 'Very good, sir. Now, here is a vehicle which will take us to Poplar quite comfortably, and without the necessity of my putting on the bracelets.'

The policeman beckoned to a passing cab, and the two got into it. As soon as they were inside, A1 relaxed his gripe of the lad, who was weeping bitterly, and bade him be of good cheer, for that it was very unlikely that they would do more than lag such a young 'un as he.

'Might I see the house, please?' cried Dick eagerly, as he perceived this change for the better in his captor's feelings. 'Might we drive slowly past, that I at least may see the house in which she is?'

'Mr Arbour's, I suppose, you mean, my lad. Well, I daresay you may. Take the right hand of the square for Poplar, cabman. Here it is, then, and there isn't much to look at, as I can see. The family's all gone out of town since yesterday, I reckon. It's all shut up, with the blinds down, and the rest of it, just as though somebody had been and gone and died—Hullo! young fellow, keep up, will you?' ejaculated the policeman, as the boy fell heavily forward, and sunk down a lifeless heap upon the floor of the cab,

'Well, I thought he was too young to carry it through so precious cool as he began it. Drive as fast as you can, will you, cabby? for your fare here has been and fainted slap bang off.'

ON PAROLE.

DURING the twenty-three years' war with France, which, beginning with the wild anti-monarchical manifestoes of the Committee of Public Safety in 1792, came to its apogee at Mont St Jean in the June of 1815, many prisoners were necessarily made on both sides. The governments of neither Gaul nor Britain erred on the side of over-indulgence; captivity was not an Elysium on either side of the narrow seas; and as philanthropy was an infant science, and sentiment out of fashion, the public sympathies in no degree mitigated the harshness of the authorities. Indeed, the French prisoners in Britain were very unpopular, and were regarded by many worthy folks as the authors of all evil amongst us. Coining was a very usual offence just then; the land was flooded with bad shillings and base half-crowns, the making or circulating of which the law punished with death, or such minor punishment as his majesty should deem fit. His majesty seldom did deem any minor punishment fit for such flagrant misconduct. The hangman was very busy, but somehow the bad money seemed to abound the more for the countless convictions and executions which blackened the records of the age. Now, this fraudulent mint was believed to be a device of the French prisoners. They—the captured grenadiers and artillerymen—being ingenious in their way, really did plait straw-hats, and mats, after the fashion of their country, and, to the great detriment of Dunstable, offered the same for sale, though their workmanship was remorselessly burned whenever their guardians could find it. Nobody doubted that those who could make straw-hats could also make false shillings, wherefore the chief 'smashers' were the French prisoners—Q. E. D.

Still, although the great camp of Norman Cross was famed for its harsh discipline—though contractors nibbled away a part of the prisoner's loaf, and the beef may have been inferior, and the guard severe, and though the hard fortune of those confined on board the hulks is a favourite theme for declamation in French literature at this hour—still it is a curious fact that few of the actual captives spoke evil of their captors when restored to freedom. Norman Cross was bad enough, but Verdun, where our countrymen lay, was worse. The hulks were wretched, but Biche was 'in the lowest deep, a lower deep.' And those places where the prisoners on parole were confined were anything but overstrict in their regulations. At Lichfield, for instance, were stationed 2000 Gauls—officers and privates—watched by a military force that was partly under canvas, and partly quartered in the quaint old town, under the shadow of the renowned triple spire of the minster. The Frenchmen were picked Frenchmen—the good boys, in fact, culled from among the foreign pupils in Dame Britannia's stern school. Only the tractable and well behaved among the men, only the officers who had made no attempt at escape, were privileged to reside on the peaceful shores of the Minster Pool, among the green meadows and leafy hedgerows of Staffordshire. A single offence was enough to procure instant expulsion. The captives on parole lost caste as easily as a Brahmin does. A breach of word, an effort to flee the country, was rightly thought to deprive the prisoner of his claim to be relied on as a man of honour, but a mere trespass beyond bounds was enough to call down the same punishment. The law was Draconic, and the punishment was the transference to the penal settlement of Norman Cross. Was

a light-fingered conscript caught in purloining a hen?—to Norman Cross with him. Did a crusty veteran become disrespectful to the ruling powers?—Norman Cross was the word. Did M. le Commandant Chose take a promenade into the country beyond the prescribed limits?—Norman Cross was his doom.

Still, on the whole, the prisoners must have behaved well, for they conquered much stubborn prejudice, and became quite popular with the towns-people, while those who dwelt some miles off were still regarding them as blasphemous *sans culottes*. They were polite, these involuntary guests; they were gay and light of spirit, and usually affable; and, above all, they were industrious. Many English homes are still decorated by some tiny toy, some delicate model, in wood, or bone, or ivory, the handiwork of the French prisoners. It was wonderful to see out of what unpromising materials they would construct pretty knick-knacks, fit for the most attractive stall a fancy-fair could boast; and equally remarkable was it to watch them at their toil. There they were, the sprightly little aliens, chirruping and singing over their task—one man turning a leg-of-mutton bone into an approved model of the guillotine, victim, executioners, and all; another cutting out a delicate ship in ivory, with every rope distinct, and the utmost finish of detail; while a third was turning shavings of stained-wood into work-boxes, or making such baskets of variegated straw as no native gipsy could equal. The poor artists made a good deal by their industry, even in that period of taxation and scarcity, when the ploughman had to pay a shilling for a loaf, and there was no gold left in England. The prisoners were not content with carving bones and making work-boxes: they sought employment as grooms and gardeners, and as male servants were expensive just then in England, owing to the demands which the immense army, navy, and militia made on the nation at large, the petition of the captives was well received.

It is true, that few Britons of that time were rash enough to intrust a horse to a Frenchman's tender mercies—grooming was an accomplishment only fit for King George's native-born subjects; but it was soon discovered that the foreign candidates for garden-ware were exceedingly clever, and they were therefore gladly allowed to beat their swords into pruning-knives. It was amusing to see some sturdy top-booted Briton, in the blue coat, flowered vest, and bunch of seals of the old school, giving orders in dumb show to his grinning and gesticulating gardener, and to watch the infinite amount of pantomime, the shrugs, grimaces, and skips with which the Gaul supplied the place of words. Moreover, there was a strip of neglected land near the town-walls; and this waste plot the prisoners begged of the corporation of Lichfield, and being permitted to take possession, they forthwith cultivated innumerable little patches of onions, potatoes, lettuces, and other vegetables, while others fished in all pools and streams within their bounds. Even the reptile world had to contribute to the *cuisine* of these forced exiles: the peasants and school-boys swore that the French had captured and cooked every frog within two miles of the town, and I am sure that no one grudged them this national dainty. While the privates were hoeing turnips or angling for the *Batrachia*, the officers were in many cases received into society by the gentry of the place kindly enough. Some of the poorest of them gave lessons in their native tongue, or taught the youth of Staffordshire the accomplishments of fencing and dancing, or how to discourse dulcet sounds on the flute or violin. Yet, poor fellows, they must have had many a dull hour while awaiting the cartel of exchange that was to send them back to the cafés and theatres of their own land, soon in many cases to be deserted for the grim realities of a Russian campaign, and a soldier's hasty grave.

There were some there, however, and those by no

means the least liked by English families to whom they were known, to whom no cartel could bring the summons of freedom. There was, for instance, an old friend of mine, still alive, the Marquis de Pontorson. The marquis was a gay young colonel then; he had entered the army at eighteen, to save his neck and his estate from the sharp decrees of the Convention; had won his *grades* at the sword's-point; and had surrendered a town, himself, and his regiment, to Lord Wellington's troops. Napoleon threatened to shoot Pontorson, if the latter returned from captivity, and the poor marquis seemed doomed to perpetual imprisonment. He was not the only one with whom the great Emperor was displeased. Several officers dared not go back—they had done their best, and Napoleon wanted more than the best—wanted to erase the word 'impossible' from French dictionaries, and vowed that a short shrift and a smart volley should await the *gredins* when they came back to him. They never did come back to him. Some died in exile, some returned to France with the allies; others, and the marquis in especial, married blue-eyed daughters of perfidious Albion, acquired the language in some degree, and became half Anglicised. Yet it was curious and pathetic to see them kissing and crying over their crosses of the Legion, the baubles they had shed their blood for under the banners of France, and deploring the harshness of the Emperor. They never spoke of him with disrespect, not even those whose career his easily provoked anger had blighted. As for the common soldiers, they idolised him. Most of them had some little portrait or bust of the Man of Destiny, which they carried about like a fetish, and kissed, and gazed upon for hours. Of a different frame were the views of Britons regarding the shallow, king-making and king-breaking Corsican. 'Boney' was the ogre of our nurseries; little children were frightened into good-behaviour by the threat that Boney should be sent for to eat them—Boney, that tall skeleton, with sabre and plumed beaver, and cannibal grin, who scowled on all honest folks from the print-sellers' windows, and who, as being the very genius of pictorial Famine, was deemed an appropriate emperor for the traditionally lean and hungry French. Bonaparte—for to use the word Napoleon was then reckoned a petty treason to good King George on the throne, and his plump guest at Hartwell—was the bugbear of the nation to an extent hardly to be realised now-a-days. The French prisoners derived some interest in British eyes from their connection with this Incarnation of Evil. They caught, as it were, some sparkles of the infernal lustre of this monstrous war-dragon, with baleful breath, and adamant scales, and fiery jaws ever gaping to swallow nations at a mouthful. Most of them had seen him, some had spoken with him—with him, Napoleon Bonaparte, whose words made monarchs shake in their royal shoes, and whose audacity kept all Britain at drill. This *vieille moustache* could repeat what the Emperor had said to him when he received the *croix*; those few syllables, and that scrap of ribbon, were ample compensation for toil, and wounds, and captivity. This old soldier could boast of a kind word; that young conscript, while lying wounded after his first battle, had been consoled by a smile, or a '*Pauvre enfant*' from the Man of Destiny; and their comrades paid them a certain meed of honour, because *his* glance had deigned to rest on them. We English folks sneered, and wondered, and admired this devotion of the prisoners to their idol, and envied a little, perhaps, the rapture of their veneration for the conqueror. Just then, we had no idol of our own, in particular.

When the war began, and for some years after, our passion of loyalty, love, and homage had been all for Great George our king; but the war had gone on ill and lingeringly, except at sea, where no hostile flag now floated, and where our fleets were supreme. Bread was dear, trade slack, and grumbling plentiful.

Great George our king was old, and blind of mind and body, and his subjects had lost sight of him for ever: the most fervid loyalty could hardly carry its aspirations to that padded room at Windsor. Lord Wellington, not yet a hero, was painfully struggling in Portugal against the furious tide of the French attack; the funds were fabulously low; and riots seemed indigenous to the manufacturing districts. Presently, there came a change. The mail-coaches thundered into the towns, laured like so many bowers upon wheels, nay, the very wheels were twined with dusty evergreens; bays were twisted round the heads of the smoking horses, wreathed into their harness, and blended with their tails. High on the giddy roof, where even the luggage of the passengers was bedecked with laurels like a trophy, stood the guard in his official red coat, reading out to the breathless populace the Gazette which announced some Peninsular victory. How the people shouted, and the bells rang triple bob-majors, and the volunteers fired salutes, and the sternest schoolmasters gave half-holidays to their excited charge! Woe to the windows that should be dark and candleless that night, when an illumination was decreed in honour of Badajoz, or Salamanca, or red Vittoria! Wonderful was the stir and huzzaing, amazing the joy, and beer-drinking, bell-ringing, smashing of window-glass, and consuming of tallow-dips, as the news of each new triumph came on the notes of Fame's blatant trumpet—the mail-coach horn!

It must have been with curious sensations that the French prisoners, chipping at their ivory frigates, or training their scarlet-runners, heard all these rejoicings. I wonder how they felt when the earliest intelligence was communicated to them respecting the disasters of their compatriots, so many cannon taken, so many stands of colours, captives, treasure—such and such a list of killed and wounded—all the meagre items which the dry little newspapers of the day dribbled out to the excited public, and which sound so mean and unsatisfactory when compared with the florid eloquence of Our Own Correspondent, now-a-days. Huzza for my Lord Wellington! the little boys used to shout, with the thoughtlessness of their time of life, when they saw the good-natured grinning Gauls: 'What do you think of Boney now, mounseer?' The Frenchmen took the inquiry well enough, with a shrug and a grimace, and perhaps a pinch of snuff, if they had any snuff. 'Think of Boney, indeed!' They thought the same of him as ever—that he was invincible, fate-compelling, king of men. They were not in the least angry with that M. Vilainton of ours for some minor successes in Spain and Portugal over the French arms; that was but the fortune of war: the Emperor would put that little matter to rights when he should come back from his Moscow campaign, dragging with him the Czar in chains, and crowned with Cossack victories.

I am afraid that some honest tax-payers in Staffordshire were not a little disgusted that the prisoners should have made so light of the reverses of France in the field. Fortresses fell—battles were won—Iberian provinces regained from the gripe of the spoiler—Joseph the Satrap, king of Spain, and brother of 'Boney,' was flying from his usurped realm, and his very plate and plunder were overhauled by Wellington's dragoons; but the Gallic guests at Lichfield kept up their spirits jocosely, and never doubted the luck of the Emperor for an instant. But when news came of the terrible retreat from Moscow, with Frost and Kutusoff pressing on the heels of the Grand Army, and how whole brigades of world-renowned veterans died daily by cold and hunger, then a gloomy change came over the prisoners too: they grew morose and silent; their everlasting camp-songs, camp-stories, were hushed; their gay, gasconading, hopeful spirit was under a cloud at last.

Emperor-worship was the main religion of most of these poor fellows, and they beheld the darkness of misfortune that was fast enveloping their glittering idol, in much the same mood with which the Chinaman watches an eclipse of the sun. A deep depression succeeded to the familiar merriment of the prisoners; they hung their heads, and ceased to twirl their moustaches into that conquering, defiant twist which the French *militaire* most affects. No more fiddling and dancing; their flutes blew the dolefullest of dirges; their manners grew brusque and surly, and amongst themselves they often quarrelled desperately.

It was at this time that young De Mousseux, a Bonapartist *pur sang*, who had been an aide-de-camp on Napoleon's personal staff, who was only twenty-five, and already a colonel, had an altercation with Count Louis de Fresnes, a captain of chasseurs, who came of an old Legitimist stock, and was supposed to be but a time-serving partisan of the bellicose Corsican. At anyrate, two young officers of an English cavalry regiment lending their kind assistance, and getting a month's arrest for so doing, a duel was fought with the small-sword, and the count was run through at the second pass. The venerable cathedral city was scandalised by the arrival of a yellow post-chaise, through one of the windows of which protruded the booted feet of the dead duellist, whose head was supported in the arms of the surgeon. A great turmoil resulted from this luckless affair, not that duels were scarce in that hot-blooded epoch, but that those rencounters had rarely a fatal termination. De Mousseux was taken into custody by the town-sergeants, of course, and there was talk of committing him to take his trial at the assizes; but some one suggested that to hang an alien prisoner for the murder of another would be a breach of international law, and the matter dropped. However, General Sir George Powderpuff was very angry with the gallant dragons who had seconded the Frenchmen; he ordered them into close arrest, and menaced court-martial, and it was well for the delinquents that the route came, and the regiment was ordered to the Peninsula. The ill-humour of the French was but transitory; a Gaul has a variable temper in general, and before long the men were heard fiddling and singing in their quarters, and the officers were dancing and drinking tea, and murdering the king's English, at the houses of their British friends.

Lichfield, like most of our old cathedral cities of minor importance, is but a dull and small place, where the grass grows refreshingly between the cobble-stones of the pavement, and the dogs bask on the sunny flags, in perfect confidence that no very bustling traffic will disturb the even tenor of their slumbers. But when the French prisoners were there, it was not as it now is. Railways have done for Lichfield what civilisation has done for Glencoe, according to Macaulay—that is, they have reduced it to a stagnant lifeless silence that might render it a respectable rival to Palmyra. If my poor old friend Pontorson were to cross the Channel again, and take a ticket for Lichfield, at the Euston Square terminus, he would hardly recognise the old town where he spent so many of his best years. He would find the three tall spires of the graceful cathedral, at the door of which Lord Brooke was slain in the Civil War, and the dark Minster Pool, and some of the ancient red brick houses, with their venerable trees and clustering ivy; but it would be but a huak without a kernel. When Pontorson dwelt there on parole, there was bustle and life, rattling mails bringing news, carriages whirling through clouds of dust on the obsolete road, balls, dinners, races, and reviews. Lichfield is not the only English Tadmor which was gay and noisy in the old war-time, when the country, though it lacked bread, flowed with wine, when the nation, fighting hard, and armed against invasion, yet found

time for more hearty genial mirth and merriment than more prosperous periods have ever known. At that day, every second man in England was in a red coat, for if a gentleman was not in the army, the militia, or the yeomanry, he was certain to be a volunteer. And what volunteers! What a contrast to the gray tunic-wearing, sharp-shooting heroes of 1860, were those tightly stockied, tightly gaitered, red-coated defenders of 1810, spotless as to pipe-clay, powdered till their hair, what with flour and pomatum, was as the driven snow, and pig-tailed as Benbow himself! Yet their stout hearts were the same, under those strangling crossbelts, as it is to be hoped that British hearts will ever be; and if their queues were sometimes, as malicious wags asserted, so tightly screwed that the wearers could not shut their eyes, the more praise was due to their patriotism. There were three battalions of such volunteers in the camp on Cannock Chase, a few miles from Lichfield, along with yeomanry and volunteer-horse, and militia and regulars. Altogether, there must have been eighteen or nineteen thousand men, all in red and blue, all powdered, all pigtailed, all pipe-clayed to perfection, and all under canvas, in a camp perhaps a trifle less orderly than Aldershot or Shorncliffe, but very picturesque to look upon, and as gay as a fair in the pleasant days of summer. At the first blush of the thing, it appeared as if these nineteen thousand warrior Britons were in arms to watch over the two thousand of their vanquished enemies in Lichfield; but this was a mistaken view of the spirit of the age. England bristled with such camps: north and south, east and west, out of a population scarcely half the present muster-roll, there had sprouted from the free soil of our island-home such a growth of armed men as no other European country has ever produced. As for Cannock Chase, where the Staffordshire camp was formed, it was a wild and wide tract of purple moor and felled forest, just fitted for military occupation, and useless for agriculture. In this actual year of grace, a royal commission has fixed on it as the best site for a new national arsenal, more out of reach than Portsmouth and Woolwich. In the old war, the brown heaths and tangled copes rang incessantly to the music of the shrill life and rattling drum, as by squads and companies, and regiments and brigades, the recruits learned the trade of arms, prior to reinforcing Lord Wellington's struggling army.

That courtly veteran, Sir George Powderpuff, was in command. It was a delightful illustration of the popular theory, which demands the right man in the right place. General Sir George was in the right place; a high-born, well-mannered gentleman, a martinet, and yet a courtier. There were those who avouched his descent from the identical nobleman who angered practical Hotspur, and he certainly was familiar with no powder but such as still contributes L.3, 13s. 6d. to the assessed taxes. But this dainty warrior was great at drill, and admirable at recruiting. Rougher men, such as Hill and Picton, might do the coarse fighting in Spain; it was the province of Sir George to furnish the raw material of heroism. And the work was one requiring tact, invention, and a perseverance that no obstacles could exhaust. The voluntary system seemed worn out; Britain was drained of blood; bounties were high, but every village could tell of its score of stout lads who had marched gleefully off to leave their bones at Walcheren, in Egypt, anywhere and everywhere, and the survivors were shy of the fatal shilling. Often did poor Powderpuff own that things were better managed in France, and that a conscription made matters remarkably comfortable. There was a compulsory ballot in England; but it was only for militia purposes. A thousand yokels might crowd into Lichfield Market or Tamworth Fair, and Sir George could not lay his itching fingers on one of them. But Sir George was lucky in the

services of Sergeant Kite. He is dead now, poor fellow, and his successors are degenerate dwarfs; but Kite of the old war was no common man. He was an orator, a poet, a *bon vivant*, and a lover of his species. It was grand to behold him, erect, portly, flaunting in gay ribbons, and the brightest of scarlet coats, parading the streets of a town, his black hawk's eye twinkling as he measured every man's inches. But it was grander to listen to his wonderful orations, where patriotism, plunder, finest climate in the world, promotion, rosy wine, black-eyed señoritas, a toast, a song, a sentiment, and a coach-and-six, were all marvellously mixed and mingled in a sort of intoxicating Hecate's broth that few could resist. He was an enthusiast, Sergeant Kite, and no doubt believed implicitly in the very biggest of the lies that fell from his glib lips: he accredited himself actually to have shared in the bloody fights, 'hairbreadth 'scapes, carouses, triumphs, and sieges, of which he discoursed—he who had never been beyond Chatham on the one hand, or Cork on the other. Then, his tact—the artful mode in which he would insinuate himself into the confidence of the wariest Chawbacon—his frankness, his good songs, his mellow voice, that hospitality of his, that always began with a pint of ale, and ended with the words, 'You swear, for an unlimited number of years, in peace and war, and so forth'—all this was truly artistic, and Sergeant Kite was justly an esteemed favourite of General Sir George Powderpuff. There were other hunters after men who did their spiriting less gently than our friend the sergeant.

The navy has always been renowned for a more frank and bluff method of proceeding than the kindred service. While Kite was cajoling poor Hodge in the tap of the King's Arms, other still more pressing gentlemen, who would take no denial, and had no more respect for Magna Charta than for the Shasters of Zerdusht, were besetting Hodge's brother on the highway. Hodge's brother *must* come to sea with them—he really *must*, and they would take no denial. Though Lichfield was an inland place, it was generally the temporary abode of a press-gang. Every evening, at dusk, out they slipped, the stout blue-jackets in their gregos and tarpaulin hats, with cutlasses and cudgel, and the man-hunt commenced. They lurked in the lanes near public-houses, watching for the tipsy revellers; they put ropes across the high-roads, and ensnared the passers-by. Every loose lounge felt a hard hand upon his collar. 'Go, carry Sir John Falstaff to the fleet!' was the word with them; and it was in vain that the belated journeyman remonstrated, for it appeared that though the constitution forbade taking soldiers by force, to press sailors was lawful, perhaps on account of the beneficial effects of sea-air. There were gentlemen who approved the system highly: they gave many a hint, and got rid of many a poacher and pilferer by the friendly importunity of the boatswain and his crew. Tramps and incorrigible idlers were thought fair game; apprentices were protected by law, also burghers and yeomen; and it never occurred to the most ambitious lieutenant to carry off the young squires to man the fleets of Collingwood or Jervis. A footman of the bishop's was trepanned on one occasion, and remained trembling all night in the crimping-house, but poor James was rescued in the morning by his right reverend employer.

While these things went on, while a man was a commodity so much in request, it is natural that Sergeant Kite should have cast a sheep's eye, once and again, at the sturdy Gallic prisoners. Most of them were hopeless as recruits, for two reasons—first, they were French to the backbone; and secondly, they were not tall enough to fight for King George, though they had stature enough to enable them to fight against him. But there were others, well up to the standard, strapping Rhinelanders, whose German sympathies were

not so actively Bonapartist. To catch these honest Deutschers was one of Kite's most delicate tasks; they loved beer, they loved Fatherland, they were not averse to George of Hanover and Britain, and so far all was well. But, on the other hand, their French companions in captivity were quick-tempered and resentful, and might brain them for listening to the blandishments of the syren Kite, while Napoleon's marshals would make short work of them, should they again have the luck to be taken prisoners. To convert a Westphalian conscript of Boney into a full private in the King's German Legion was no ordinary feat, and Kite prided himself on it in proportion to its difficulty. In the year 1813, the races at Lichfield promised to be unusually attractive. There were garrison-cups, garrison-stakes, plates, a whole assortment of silver to be run for; and the county was liberal with its prizes. The prisoners, among others, were looking forward to the fun of seeing their captors risk their necks, in John Bull fashion, when an untoward event occurred. General Houbigant, brother to the Marshal Houbigant, Duke of Transylvania, Grand Cross of every order Napoleon's hands could bestow, broke his parole in a very shabby manner, rather befitting his parent the suttler than his brother the duke; and going off with post-horses to the coast, escaped to France. Old Sir George Powderpuff was justly angry with the runaway, but he was unjustly angry with the others. He confined them strictly to their prison limits; all leave and licence were withdrawn; and the poor Gauls lost the gay spectacle of the race for Houbigant's fault. But there was one young officer, a captain in the Imperial Guard, who was so anxious to see his conquerors, Messieurs Plumpudding, gallop in jackets of silk, to see which could go the quickest (races were not ingrafted on French customs as yet), that he resolved to venture. A school-boy, a lad of twelve, who much patronised the tall captain, volunteered to escort him, and up went the ill-assorted pair to the breezy common, where the white tents were pitched, and the gaudy flags flying, and the multitude buzzing eagerly, as the smooth-skinned horses were paraded past the stand. The Frenchman was in ecstasy with all he heard and saw; he clapped his hands with delight, he laughed and gesticulated to the amusement of his young ally, and was enjoying the sport to the utmost, when, as ill-luck would have it, up rode young Harry Powderpuff, nephew and aide-de-camp to old Sir George. When the aide-de-camp espied the Frenchman, he trotted briskly up; and at the sight of the awful staff-uniform, and white plumes, and curvetting charger, the unfortunate captain winced in his shoes like a school-boy out of bounds.

'What are you doing here, mounseer?' demanded the Briton very sternly.

'I came with M. Charley; I am under the protection, vot you call, of M. Charley,' said the poor Gaul humbly enough, trying to screen his tall person behind his little friend. It was the giant and the dwarf over again, only the *roles* were changed somehow. Charley knew Harry Powderpuff well, and spoke up for his whiskered friend like a man.

'Well,' said the aide-de-camp, 'I shall be in hot water if Sir George hears of it; but never mind; I won't peach, Charley. But be off with your friend before the staff passes; for if my uncle sees him, by Jove, he'll send him to Norman Cross at once!'

There came a day when Norman Cross was to be a bugbear no longer, when bounds were to be abolished, and Powderpuff's military pupils were to break up for a long holiday. It was 1814. The Allies were in Paris; Louis the Desired was on the throne of France; the French prisoners, enemies no longer, were going home. Amid tears, and hand-shakings, and waving kerchiefs, and the unfailing English cheer, this little colony broke up for ever. In long column of march, preceded by the bands of the British regiments, the

French took their departure, not without some kindly feelings of regret on both sides. Since then, our island has happily seen little of prisoners of war.

A SCOTTISH HERO IN A NEW LIGHT.

A WELL-WRITTEN life of Edward I., under the title of *The Greatest of the Plantagenets*,* is calculated to produce a strange feeling on the north of the Tweed, by the view which it takes of the monarch's connection with Scotland, but more particularly by the account which it presents of the famous William Wallace. Three or four years ago, the able Scottish noble who has just achieved such a satisfactory settlement of affairs in China, presided at a great meeting near Stirling, for the erection of a national monument to Wallace; a few days since the newspapers informed us, that for this object a sum exceeding £5300 has been collected, and that money continues to pour in at the rate of about £1500 a year, derived, we believe, from Scotsmen in every corner of the world. In contrast with the view of Wallace's character and doings which this argues, it is somewhat startling to find an evidently clever and intelligent English writer speaking of the knight of Elderslie as only a thirteenth-century counterpart of the noted Nana Sahib.

In these matters, all depends on one's point of view. Our Englishman, knowing well the sagacity and other great gifts of Edward—seeing, in his policy for the combination of all parts of our island under one rule, a design calculated to promote the good of all—defends his conduct towards the Scotch. A Scotsman, on the other hand, feeling a pride in the ancient independence of his country, cannot well be induced to regard Longshanks as other than a usurper and an oppressor. From the same considerations it naturally flows, that the names of Wallace and Bruce, who defended and asserted Scottish independence, should be enshrined in the hearts of their countrymen, but condemned by the biographer of the Plantagenet as traitorous rebels and barbarous chiefs. Doubtless, even Nana Sahib himself is not without admirers amongst his countrymen; and if ever the people of Hindustan succeed in establishing a national independence, as the Scots did, we may expect to hear the praises of the Cawnpore chief sounded, notwithstanding such shades upon his character arising from the massacre of the women and children.

Fair-play, however, is a jewel. The greatness of Edward as a sovereign and lawgiver, and even his general equity and clemency, may be admitted, but yet we think it is evident that he did not act quite rightly towards Scotland. All the dexterous pleading of this advocate will never wipe away the obvious fact, that the English king, having some obscure claim to be paramount over a part of the Scottish dominions, was found, in the course of a few years, to have so worked this right, as to put himself in the position of *absolute sovereign* over the whole realm. No railing against the rebelliousness of the Scottish nobles as his subjects, will ever take away from them the excuse that the people of Scotland generally felt that his claim on the allegiance of any of their number as an absolute sovereign, was, from the beginning, unjust; so that all was fair that they could do for their emancipation from his rule. What, again, can be more natural and excusable than that, the Scots having wrought out their own deliverance, their descendants should exult somewhat in the fact, and take the most lenient views of the characters of those by whom that deliverance was achieved? Robert Bruce may have been traitor to Edward, and a murderer; and yet we cannot but think it very natural that the people of Scotland should continue to feel a gratitude towards him, and to

even somewhat magnify his name, seeing how, by great daring and long suffering, and, finally, by consummate military skill, he released them from a foreign and hated yoke.

The curious consideration, however, is as to Wallace. The panegyrist of the Plantagenet endeavours to diminish the importance of this hero as far as possible, by making out that his entire career lasted only some fourteen months. The victory over Edward's lieutenant at Stirling, he speaks of as made certain to almost any leader, by the extraordinary folly of the English general. He chiefly insists, however, on Wallace's cruelties to men, women, and children in the course of his invasion of the northern English counties; facts charged against him on his trial, and which were never denied. A life of rapine and cruelty deserved, he thinks, no other end than the scaffold. Grant, after all, that these are truths, is there nothing due to the patriotic sentiment which brought this obscure Renfrewshire gentleman into action? Are we to be so besotted by admiration of the illustrious English king, that we shall not sympathise in some fair and reasonable measure with a guerrilla chief who braved him in behalf of his country, and boldly met him in a pitched battle, albeit to his own ruin? Perhaps, too, if we had Wallace before us, we might hear of some extenuating considerations regarding even his Cumberland ravages. It might appear to him necessary to strike terror into those English counties which chiefly supplied the armies for the iniquitous subjugation of Scotland. The not much less horrible doings of Cromwell at Drogheda have been defended in our own day by a favourite writer with derisive allusions to 'rose-water surgery.' And, any how, who began the warfare, but this greatest of the Plantagenets himself? Was not *he* mainly answerable for the horrors which arose in the course of the justifiable opposition which he met with?

It occurs to us that our author has rather overstated his case, and thereby damaged it. He might have admitted that his hero tried to filch a kingdom, and failed after thrice overrunning it, smitten by the Nemesis which is the fitting end of all great errors. He might have taken a generous view of the Scottish resistance and its heroes, sympathising with its motives, even while he deplored its success as something unfavourable to the interests of the entire island. Enough would have remained to establish Edward as the greatest of English sovereigns before Elizabeth. By taking the course he has done, he provokes dissent from his own general conclusions. And, in any case, he may be assured that he will never induce Scotland to abate one jot of her veneration for the name of her ill-requested chief.

Nobody's Newspapers.

If any man wishes to ruffle one of the sweetest tempers with which a human being was ever endowed, let him send me a newspaper which has in it nothing concerning me or mine whatever. Among the minor evils of life, these nobody's newspapers seem to me to stand pre-eminent. For example: I have done my breakfast, and am leaving home for my office, with that assiduous punctuality which is my characteristic, when the postman comes with my letters—and a strange newspaper. The former I recognise by their superscriptions, so far as to know who wrote them, and conjecture nothing very formidable from their contents. But these eight pages of the *Bumblepuppy Independent*, addressed to me in a feigned or unknown hand, what may not *they* contain which affects me and my interests? I am (let us suppose) an author, and some kind creature may have forwarded to me a eulogium upon my still insufficiently appreciated *Blood-stained Bandit*, of which a few copies are still remaining at the publishers; or some 'd—d good-

* 8vo. Bentley, London, 1880.

natured friend' may have thus sent me a hostile critique, for fear it should otherwise escape my notice; and in either case, the thing must be looked into, or I shall be upon thorns till I come home again. Or, I am a barrister, and there is a silk gown going a-begging, which has been mentioned as adapted for every pair of legal shoulders except mine, until this far-seeing Bumblepuppy editor (perhaps) has put the matter in its proper light before the public. Or, I am a divine, and the cathedral stall of Dreamchancel may at length have been suggested by something else than my own inward monitor as being the very thing to suit a student of retired habits, who only wants a little leisure and a comfortable income to enrich the scholarship of his country by some *magnum opus*. I am, at all events, engaged in some pursuit or calling in which prizes are to be had, and what but the public press should indicate the right man for the right place? I set down my hat and gloves, therefore, and open the mysterious present not without anxiety. My eye runs through the eight pages rapidly for some cross or mark which the sender, if not an absolute idiot, would surely not fail to place against the paragraph to which he would call my attention. But no; there is nothing but a blotch over against the advertisement of a chiropodist, who bids us beware of untradesmen-like imitations of his miraculous bunion plasters, which is felonious. That must be an accidental blotch, for I have no crime of that sort to reproach myself with. There is also a fainter mark on the next page opposite to the account of a complete immersion (in December) of a Plymouth Brother, which can scarcely be designed for my conversion, and, indeed, is only the first blotch 'gone through.' Then I apply myself to peruse the *Bumblepuppy Independent* in its integrity, with an irritated but still expectant mind. The leading article dwells exclusively upon the abominable extortion practised by the local water-company, without one syllable, of course, about the *Blood-stained Bandit*, or the silk gown, or the cathedral stall; and the summary of news is only not the same as that of my own newspaper, perused before the post came in, because it is the interesting intelligence of at least a fortnight ago.

No; I am in no way mixed up with the Bumblepuppy Turnpike Trust, nor in the Canal *versus* Railway Company's action, nor in the right of way through Stoggin's Wood. Nothing that I want is even going to be sold by Messrs Hammerdown, High Street, Bumblepuppy, on the 17th instant; and if there was, I should not get it, for the 17th has passed a week ago. I was not concerned in that robbery with violence upon Crackskull Common, about which 'our efficient inspector is on the *qui vive*;' the free pardon and reward to any but the actual principals, kindle no hope within me. I am not at all prostrated by the intelligence that the Bumblepuppy Tea-gardens positively closed for the season (and indeed I think it was high time they should) on Saturday last; nor should I be revived, did I need revival, by the news that the proprietor received a 'bumper.' I am faintly curious to know what a 'bumper' may be, but that is all; the *Independent* says that it is glad he got it, but the *Independent*, for all I know, may be his bitterest enemy. I was not among 'the following Bumblepuppy guardians of the poor,' who 'transacted business on Tuesday,' nor in the Bumblepuppy petty sessions when that 'scene' took place between a clergyman and a county magistrate, which is likely to afford employment to the gentlemen of the long robe. I am not connected with the circus which proposes to remain for a limited number of nights at Bumblepuppy, nor with the Revival which is to be held in Messrs Weathereye's empty granary next Sunday evening. I am not in Our London Correspondent's letter (although almost everybody else seems to be), nor in the List of candidates for the vacant office of Beadle of the borough. In a word,

after an hour has been wasted in wading through these thirty-two columns of provincial twaddle, I find that there is nothing that concerns me in it from beginning to end. What malicious fellow-creature, then, could have expended a penny, and given himself the trouble of directing this farrago of rubbish to me? Is it the same kind of maniac who pours dirty water into the pillar letter-boxes? Or is it a funny fellow, who mistakes this 20th of December for April Fool Day? or is it an editor who cannot dispose of his own newspapers by any other means?

The case I put is very far from being an imaginary one. Every month or so, some unknown correspondent takes advantage of the cheapness of colonial postage to send me a nobody's newspaper—of all places in this world, from Sydney! I wish the government would charge five shillings for the transmission of Australian newspapers. Is it some scamp of my family, who, after leaving the old country for the old country's good, adopts this method of annoying his respectable relatives even from the other side of the globe? Is it some wretch whose necessities I may have one day injudiciously relieved, and who now, more prosperous in the new world, adopts this mistaken method of testifying his gratitude? Or is it some editor who wishes, through my humble means, to make his paper known to the English public at home? I will conclude that this last is the case, and for my own sake—not for his—will here set down, for the first and last time, what is noticeable in the periodical which he has the happiness to conduct. I regret to say that my remarks must be limited to its advertisements. In the body of the paper I find nothing to interest myself, nor any other British mortal. The *Sydney Intelligencer* is merely the *Bumblepuppy Independent* transplanted to the antipodes.

The first advertisement sheet is almost entirely maritime, and reads like a leaf out of the *Shipping Gazette*. It is evident that not even the seductive voice of the *Sydney Intelligencer* can persuade people that they are better off there than they are at home. Everybody would get away, I think, only so very few seem to have the money to pay their passage home. An immigrant must be able to put his hand to most things in Sydney, to keep his head above water at all.

'Wanted by an elderly gentleman of strict integrity, a situation in a private family, as teacher of the pianoforte.' (By which I suppose he means as teacher of how to play upon it). How different is this from the advertisements of musical-masters at home! Here, some sort of proficiency is expected, and a long list of the professors under whom the advertiser has studied his art, is essential; whereas at the antipodes only 'strict integrity' is required. What a pathetic statement, too, is this elderly gentleman's! Can we not imagine him a once well-to-do Paterfamilias, who, having been wont to run a few tunes off on the keys, to please his children, is now compelled to look to that simple accomplishment for his bread? But no, he must have been an uncle rather—one of those uncles who are always the favourites of the young folks, but rather a source of embarrassment to the old ones, on account of their continuously borrowing money until they get their expenses paid out to Australia—for happily he has only himself to provide for. 'Salary not so much an object,' writes the poor fellow, 'as a comfortable home.'

Here, again, is a wonderful specimen of a Jack-of-all-Trades: 'Wanted, a situation of trust and responsibility by the advertiser, who has had upwards of five years' experience of the colony, embracing, at various times, clerical duties generally, in solicitors' and merchants' offices, and as a secretary in a public institution, also as bookseller, reporter, and sub-editor in town and country.' What are 'clerical duties generally, in solicitors' and merchants' offices?' Are legal and commercial proceedings 'opened with prayer' in Sydney, like those of the swindling joint-stock banks

in England? or are they such gigantic Concerns that a chaplain is kept in every 'house,' as clergyman-of-all-work? or is it only a defect in the clerical gentleman's arrangement of his words? In that case, he cannot be what is called 'a literate person,' but must needs proceed from one of the universities. Conceive, then, what base mutations he must have experienced from his palmy days at Oxford or at Cambridge, down through the solicitors' and merchants' offices, the secretaryship in the public institution, the bookselling and reporting, and the sub-editing in town and country!

'L5 reward, if stolen; one pound, if strayed, on recovery of an iron-gray horse, off-hip down, newly shod on the hind foot.'

'Stolen or strayed, a bay horse, branded HE conjoined on near-shoulder; a brown horse, branded E on off-shoulder. L5 given on conviction, and 10s. each on recovery.'

Is it the inverted order of things at the antipodes which causes people thus to reward thieving more highly than honesty? or are stolen horses in Sydney of greater value than Sydney horses that have strayed?

Among the pleasure-excursions, there is nothing striking except that it seems rather strange that one can get return-tickets to Paramatta, just as though it were Gravesend, for eighteen-pence; while of exhibitions there is but one, to which, however, no less than five advertisements are dedicated. It is difficult from the first four to discover of what nature this attraction may be. '*The greatest Phenomenon in the world previous to his departure for England, next Victoria Theatre.*' The Sphinx herself could scarcely have worded a notice more ingeniously. To the departure of what person, who seems to have placed this otherwise unrivalled Phenomenon in the second rank, does this refer? or does it affirm that it is the greatest Phenomenon next to the Victoria Theatre? What wondrous pile, then, is the Victoria Theatre? These gentlemen who

Hold their heads to other stars,
And breathe in converse seasons,

appear to express themselves a little conversely also: '*The Wonder of the World, age eleven years, and weight only twenty-two stone. Monster Band.*' The word 'only' is clearly a covert sarcasm; but Monster Band? Is that his name or his belt? There are two other mysterious puffs, and then the Phenomenon stands revealed. '*Next Victoria Theatre. The Australian Youth. Grand opening this day.*' So that it is only the dissection of a very fat boy, after all.

The most remarkable feature of this antipodean paper is, however, its Persons Advertised For:

'John Gulliver, who left Melbourne some six years ago, and supposed to be in Sydney, is informed that his sister is anxious to hear from him, at Kelly's Eating-house, Bull Street, Sandhurst, Victoria.' What slender chance has that poor sister of seeing brother John again! Six years ago! Why, not to mention the probability of his having been devoured in the Feejee Islands (to which a vessel seems to start from Sydney almost daily), John Gulliver may, within that period, have been trodden under foot by an unconscious infant in Brobdingnag, or shot to death with needles in Lilliput.

'If Thomas Annesley is in Sydney, he will hear of his brother Robert by applying at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Lower George Street, Sydney. Or if Mr Robert Ross, or his sister, Mrs Lewers or Lewis, who is from Armagh, county Armagh, Ireland, will apply at the above hotel, they will see their cousin Robert Annesley. Any information of them will be thankfully received.'

'If Hannah Gardiner, who arrived in this colony in August 1858, will call at the office of John Hoeking, Esq., Pitt Street, will hear of her brother James.'

'Robert Griffiths. Your father is staying at the Darling Harbour Inn. Call H. G.'

What are these but the dumb cries of sisters who have crossed the world to find their brothers, fathers to find their sons, and having crossed, are yet, maybe, no nearer to him they sought, who is lying a skeleton in the Bush, or even sailed for the old world, on the very day that these embarked for the new. Surely there is a pathos in this newspaper prose, which Poems of the Affections, bound in morocco, and illustrated by the best of pencils, often lack. There is nothing else in this *Sydney Intelligencer* very noteworthy, unless it be the announcement, that for part of the Christmas Treat at the Burlington Bazaar, 'lemonade and soda-water may be procured from the fountain!' How such a shivery statement reminds us at once of the 'converse seasons,' and of the Midsummer December sun! This is all, Mr Editor of the *Sydney Intelligencer*—if it be you that has sent me this thing—that I have to write upon the subject of your paper. If it does not interest the reader, I cannot help it. It did not interest me. I sincerely trust that the sender will now be satisfied, and cease to send it more. All nobody's newspapers are bad, but a nobody's newspaper from the other side of the world is to be endured by nobody.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

BUNSEN and Kirchhoff's interesting experiments with the spectrum in chemical analysis have been repeated by Mr Matthiessen, at a meeting of the Royal Society, to the gratification of all beholders, for, apart from the intrinsic value of the results, some of the effects are strikingly beautiful. The black lines seen in a solar spectrum, which are known to students as Fraunhofer's lines, appear white, as Mr Matthiessen demonstrated, when the spectrum is produced by the spark from a galvanic coil. Seeing, then, that every different kind of light hitherto tried shews a different effect on the spectrum, the light of the stars is to be tested by the same apparatus, in the hope that conclusions may be arrived at concerning the physical condition of those distant bodies, and the nature of their atmosphere. Foucault shewed, some years ago, that the ray D of the electric spectrum coincides with the same ray of the solar spectrum; if, therefore, the starlight spectrum present the same coincidence, it would be safe to infer an identity in the nature of the light. There seems something wonderful in the notion of this making out the secrets of remote space by scanning an illuminated stripe within a small darkened box. With regard to the hygienic view of the question, readers of our former notice of this subject will remember what was said concerning sodium and dust; the vast amount of sodium in the atmosphere is derived from the sea by evaporation, and diffused by the action of winds and waves; each minute particle of water holds a still more minute solid nucleus of chloride of sodium, which remains floating in the air after the water has evaporated. Now, it seems reasonable to conclude, that these minute particles supply some minute forms of organic life with the saline element essential to existence, and that animal life generally is influenced by their presence in greater or lesser proportions. Hence, to quote from the *Journal of the Chemical Society*, 'if, as is scarcely doubtful at the present day, the explanation of the spread of contagious disease is to be sought for in some peculiar contact-action, it is possible that the presence of an antiseptic substance like chloride of sodium, even in almost infinitely small quantities, may not be without influence upon such occurrences in the atmosphere.' The test for this theory would be a constant and long-continued series of spectrum observations, noted hour by hour, as has been the case with magnetical and meteorological observations, whereby the increase or diminution of sodium in the atmosphere would be detected.

Among the experiments made by Loewel, a chemist

lately deceased, there are some of singular importance, as appears from a work published in France. It was discovered, two or three years ago, that air filtered through a layer of cotton would not excite fermentation; that the freezing of water under cotton is less firm than when uncovered, and that crystallisation is retarded by the same means: Loewel found that air, heated by friction or agitation, will not excite crystallisation. If compressed air be allowed to escape in a jet from a receiver, and play upon a saturated solution, no crystals appear; but if only two or three bubbles of common air be permitted to pass, the solution will solidify. Air, in this passive condition, is distinguished as adynamic, and the filtered air would come under the same definition. What is the significance of this peculiarity? Does it apply on the large scale, and is the air of our atmosphere ever thrown into an adynamic condition by hurricanes and storms, and is the effect thereof on human beings in anywise different from that of undisturbed air? Again, is there in this adynamic air any support for the theory of spontaneous generation, or the reverse? To answer these and other inquiries which suggest themselves, would be an interesting course of research for some ingenious and diligent student.

Some years ago, Mr R. W. Fox, of Falmouth, astonished the scientific world by shewing specimens of artificial copper produced by electricity; we now hear of a German chemist who produces silver—sterling silver, not German—by artificial means, at a cost of about three shillings an ounce. We hear, moreover, that a snug company is forming to work the discovery on a profitable scale: the appliances required are certain chemical preparations and galvanic apparatus of sufficient power to act on them. Should the experiment succeed on the large scale, the profit will certainly be handsome, and additional weight will attach to the opinion, that all metals are resolvable into two or three elements.

The new telegraph company for London, to which we called attention last autumn, is making satisfactory progress, and the expectations formed of the usefulness of Mr Wheatstone's simplified instruments are fully realised. They—the company—have already erected a number of lines across the house-tops, and purpose extending the same system into all parts of the metropolis. Mr Reuter, of multi-telegram reputation, rents more than a score of wires for his own especial use; the *Times*, for the present, has taken three; the city police avail themselves of the new system, as also certain manufacturing firms; and now, when a lady calls to ask when her piano will be ready, instead of being told that she will be informed by post next day, receives an immediate answer by telegraph from the factory in the suburbs. The rent charged for a wire is £4 a mile per annum, inclusive of maintenance; and in cases where it is not desired to purchase the instruments, they also may be rented. One economical advantage, which the company derive from the use of Mr Wheatstone's instruments, is, that small wires are available for the transmission of messages; for as from thirty to fifty such wires can each be completely insulated in an india-rubber cord not thicker than a man's finger, it follows that in setting up a mile of cord fifty miles of wire are set up at once, which may be rented to as many different individuals. When set up, the cord is painted white, to check absorption of heat; and it is found that india-rubber is far preferable to gutta-percha as an insulator, inasmuch as it will bear extremes of temperature without any of that softening which allows the wires to shift their position in a gutta-percha coating. The india-rubber cord is manufactured by Messrs Silver, at their works near North Woolwich; and it is worth notice that the central wire, which is thicker than the others, is the 'hanging wire,' and bears all the strain of suspension, whereby the conducting wires are left free from strain-disturbances, and have nothing to do but

convey the messages. We hear that 400 telegraph stations are to be established in Paris.

The late severe visitation of frost has occasioned the inquiry—Is it possible to announce the approach of a frost by telegraph, as it is to give warning of a cyclone? a question of vital importance to vine-growers in the south of France. The answer, which has however to be demonstrated by practice, is that it is possible, for cold currents in the atmosphere are commonly a day or a day and a half in travelling from the north of Russia to the Pyrenees: hence, if a message were flashed from Archangel or Stockholm, notifying a fall of the temperature to 20 degrees or to 0 degrees, which would be represented by 30 degrees or by 10 degrees in the south of France, the cultivators would have sufficient time to protect their vineyards by the usual means, which, as is well known, cost but little, and are easily applicable.

The Academy of Sciences at Naples offer a prize for researches in answer to the question: What are the circumstances in which the atmospheric oxygen is transformed into ozone? Is the cause of the change to be sought for in vegetation or electricity? Does the change take place by day or by night, and in what electric condition is the atmosphere at the time of the change?—Wolf, of Zurich, is pursuing his observations on the sun-spots, and is collecting all the tables of past observations which he can hear of for the purpose of corroborating his theoretical calculations. So far the verification is satisfactory; but he is particularly in want of observations for the years 1729 and 1748; and any one who can inform him where these may be found, will aid the cause of science. He finds by his investigations that a small defined spot crossed the solar disk in 1800, which seems to answer to one of the appearances of the intra-Mercurial planet, Vulcan, as ascertained by retrospective calculation.—Dr Buijs Ballot, of Utrecht, who is also a sun-observer, with especial attention to solar rotation and temperature, is led to conclude that one half of the sun is hotter than the other. In the photosphere, or atmosphere of light, which surrounds the mighty orb, he finds a movement from west to east in the equatorial region, thereby confirming the deductions of former observers, that trade-winds exist on the sun as well as on the earth.—M. Liais shews the perturbations of Mercury which have long puzzled astronomers, to arise from its exposure to a continuous shower of aerolites, which of course affects its mass. Of this shower of aerolites, our earth occasionally receives a few wandering specimens; its quantity is enormously increased with nearness to the sun, and hence the ceaseless fall on Mercury. To it, as M. Liais remarks, we owe the phenomenon of the zodiacal light; and agreeing with other physicists, he believes it to be the source and support of the sun's heat: derived from without, and not from within.

These are among the most important questions in astronomical or in cosmochemical science, and we cannot therefore pass them by unnoticed. While one class of inquirers is occupied with their investigation, another is discussing that interesting geological question, which, in consequence of recent chemical discoveries, has once more revived—the debate between fire and water. The Neptunists, as the aqueous philosophers are called, are bringing forward more convincing arguments than before, which it will tax the ingenuity of the Vulcanists to confute. Granite cannot have been formed by the action of fire, assert the former, because that rock is constituted of minerals whose melting-point is so different that they could not have been formed at one and the same time; and yet these minerals interpenetrate and cross each other, like the roots of neighbouring trees. Again, mica and free silica exist in the same mass of granite; and some kinds of granite contain soft mica charged with from four to five per cent. of water, which facts appear quite irreconcilable with the theory of a volcanic origin.

A lively debate has also taken place among the members of the Academy of Medicine at Paris, on that highly important question—Life. The argument was carried on from three different points of view: that of the organicians; that of the animists; and that of the vitalists; and each party found much to say in support of their own opinions. The vitalists, who contend that life is a vital force entirely independent of physical influences, were triumphantly answered by M. Poggiale, who proved to demonstration that the phenomena of life are due to physico-chemical action. The chemist, applying his science to physiology, experiments on the living organism, and discovers the formation of sugar in the liver; that in respiration oxygen combines with the hydrogen and carbon of the blood, and produces animal heat; and that the gastric and pancreatic juice act upon alimentary substances enclosed in glass tubes with the same result as in the body. The result of the debate will probably be to give an impulse to the science which embraces the chemistry of life.

Dr Hooker, who has recently returned from a scientific travel in the range of Lebanon, in company with Captain Washington of the Admiralty, has catalogued the plants collected by the naturalist of the yacht *Fox* in her recent North Atlantic surveying expedition. The number is 170, of which nearly 100 are flowering-plants; and the doctor, after contrasting them with the plants of other arctic localities, and thereby widening the scope of geographical botany, adds, that he 'is drawing up a general account of the whole arctic flora, which he shall have the honour of laying before the Linnæan Society.' From the soundings made during this expedition, further confirmation has been gained that animal life can be maintained at very great depths. About midway between Greenland and Ireland, living star-fish were brought up from 1260 fathoms—nearly a mile and a half; and minute annelids were found at 1913 fathoms. Clearly the 'zero in the distribution of animal life,' referred to by the late eminent naturalist, Edward Forbes, is not yet arrived at.

At the instance of Mr Tite, the Institute of British Architects have held a discussion 'on the various processes for the preservation of stone,' in which, as was hoped, available facts and principles were brought out, and trustworthy information given as to the actual condition of the walls of the Houses of Parliament, to which the preserving wash has been applied. The whole question of building materials is one of increasing importance; and while the present high price of bricks is maintained, experiments will be made to render stone durable, or to produce some artificial substitute. We noticed, some time since, the *béton*, a kind of concrete, manufactured in blocks at Paris, suitable for walls either above or below ground, and for factory cisterns, as it resists the action of acids, and, judging from late reports, it answers expectation. A builder at Reading, actuated by a close examination of the mortar which still binds the flint walls of the ancient abbey in that town, with almost irresistible tenacity, has recently patented a process for the manufacture of what he calls 'Reading Abbey Rubble Stone,' which resists moisture, heat, cold, and pressure, presenting a clean and smooth surface, capable of formation into mouldings, corbels, quoins, balustrades, and so forth, and acquiring an extraordinary degree of hardness within a few minutes after leaving the moulds. Seeing that ornamental blocks and slabs of any size can be produced, all the parts of a house, the steps, landings, basement-stairs and floors, sinks and window-sills, may be fashioned from this 'rubble stone,' as well as blocks for the walls, and at a cost below that of bricks.

As meteorological reports come in from distant parts, it appears that scarcely any region of the globe has escaped the visitation of unusual weather: the continent of Europe, North Africa, North America, as well as England, had more clouds and

rain than sunshine; and now we hear that Australia has experienced an unusual demand for umbrellas. In the middle of November last, about a month from their midsummer, the colonists of New South Wales were glad to sit by the fire; and from the beginning of the year, up to that time, more than five feet of rain had fallen.

STEAM-IMPULLED FIRE-ENGINES.

'TO THE EDITOR OF CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL.

'HANLEY, STAFFORDSHIRE, January 18, 1861.

'SIR—In an article in a recent number of the *Journal*, "International Wrinkles," the use of steam fire-engines in America is noticed in a way that shews that the writer is not aware of the fact, that the application of steam to this purpose is of English origin, and that the invention, owing to its not being adopted by our fire-companies, was taken across the Atlantic, and has become naturalised among a people more quick to appreciate its merits. Full five-and-twenty years ago, Captain Ericson, in conjunction with Mr Braithwaite, brought out a steam fire-engine, and at their own cost, sent it to all parts of London, to aid in the extinguishing of fires. At several very extensive conflagrations, its great efficiency was established, and noticed in the public press. I saw it at work myself at an extensive fire that broke out at the back of some houses in Barbican, and extended into Bridgewater Square. The engine was placed just opposite Barbican Chapel, and the term splendid might well be applied to the services it rendered on that occasion. Its presence, however, excited the jealousy, and even the animosity of the firemen, who received its arrival with groans and other hostile demonstrations, which were only subdued by a counter-demonstration from the crowd, who broke out into loud cheering. Some years after this, a small paragraph went the round of the papers, to the effect that Captain Ericson had left this country for America, and that he had taken his fire-engine with him, in consequence of its non-adoption by the fire-companies here. Thus England not only lost the invention, but along with it the presence and services of the inventive genius of the inventor, whose exertions and skill were transferred to the people of America.

'It is worth while to inquire whether such a case as this is exceptional, or whether it is an indication of a general habit and state of mind in this country less congenial to the exercise and reward of inventive skill than is found on the other side of the Atlantic. It is chiefly in relation to this that I have thought it worth while to write this, because if such a state of things as this exists, we ought to be alive to it, and do what we can in our several spheres to remedy it.

I remain, yours truly,

GEORGE STATHAM.'

'TO THE EDITOR OF CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL.

'FIRE-ENGINE AND PUMP MANUFACTORY,
245 BLACKFRIARS ROAD,
LONDON, January 15, 1861.

'SIR—We observe in an article under the title of "International Wrinkles," published in your *Journal* of the 23d December 1860 (No. 364), that the author is not aware of any steam fire-engines being in use in this country. Knowing your desire for correct information, we think it right to inform you that floating steam fire-engines have been in use on the Thames since October 1852, and we are not aware that they have been adopted in America. The London fire-engine establishment have had one of our *land* steam fire-engines in use for the last nine months, during which it has attended various fires with great success—accounts of which have appeared in the daily papers.—We enclose a circular bearing upon the question, and remain, sir, yours very respectfully, SHAND and MASON (successors to W. J. TILLEY).'

D U T Y.

WHAT rocks the soldier on the battle-field
Whether the soil he treads be rich or bare,
The country round him desolate or fair—
Whether bright sunbeams play on lance or shield,
Or rain-clouds gather in the heavy air?
His only thought how best his arms to wield,
To force the hated foe at length to yield,
To stand the charge, or the assault to dare.
And why care I, who have my battle too,
With sin and folly, doubts, temptations, fears,
Whether the post assigned be fair to view,
Which *must* be conflict-trampled, scorched with tears—
Enough if, struggling, I o'ercome at last!
Scars turned to trophies, and their pain long past!

L. C.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by WILLIAM ROBERTSON, 23 Upper Sackville Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.